

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 241735Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 3676

INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

CNO WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK IMMEDIATE

COMIDEASTFOR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANA YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1681 SECTION 1 OF 2

EXDIS/MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR

SANA PLEASE PASS DEPSEC CLEMENT'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, MASS, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : DEPSEC CLEMENTS' MEETING WITH GOB OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY: IN OCT. 24 MEETING WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS, GOB HIERARCHY SAID IT HAD "NOTHING NEW" TO SAY ON MIDEASTFOR TENURE AT THIS TIME. FOREIGN MINISTER, SPEAKING FOR GOB, FORCEFULLY STATED HIS OBJECTIONS TO EXTENSION OF TENURE. AMIR, HOWEVER, STATED THAT "DISCUSSIONS" WILL CONTINUE WITH AMBASSADOR. HEIR APPARENT/MINISTER OF DEFENSE EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN MILITARY EQUIPMENT (SEPTTEL) WITH F-5'S AT TOP OF LIST. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS AND PARTY HAD FRANK ONE HOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ENTIRE HIERARCHY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN AND RULING FAMILY (AMIR, PRIME MINISTER, HEIR APPARENT/MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTER) OCT. 24. AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING, THE AMIR ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO ACT AS HIS TRANSLATOR, A ROLE WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER BEGAN BUT WHICH RAPIDLY WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THAT OF SPOKESMAN FOR THE GOB AS THE AMIR PARTICIPATED ONLY OCCASIONALLY IN THE RESULTANT
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DIALOGUE. PRIME MINISTER TOOK NO PART EXCEPT TO RESPOND TO

CLEMENTS' EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO VISIT WASHINGTON. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HAD HAD TO RETURN HERE IN EVENT AMIR WENT TO LATER ABORTED ARAB SUMMIT OCTOBER 18.

3. AFTER INITIAL PLEASANTRIES WERE EXCHANGED BETWEEN CLEMENTS AND THE AMIR, THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTER'S INTERPRETATION, AND AFTER CLEMENTS HAS EXPRESSED HIS AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S AND RUMSFELD'S REGRET THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO VISIT WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS EARLIER IN THE MONTH, CLEMENTS RAISED QUESTION OF TENURE OF MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN. THE AMIR ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE GOB. FOREIGN MINISTER PROCEEDED TO STATE THAT AT PRESENT TIME GOB HAS "NOTHING NEW" TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT BUT IT WOULD DISCUSS ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS WITH AMBASSADOR. AT CLEMENTS URGING, FOREIGN MINISTER THEN PROCEEDED FORCEFULLY TO SUMMARIZE GOB POSITION VERY MUCH ALONG LINES OF HIS RECENT MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON IN NEW YORK (STATE 246032). THE THRUST OF THE MESSAGE WAS THAT IN ABSENCE OF SOME "NEW FORMULA", WHICH NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND, THE GOB MUST STICK TO ITS DECISION THAT MIDEASTFOR DEPART BHARAIN IN JUNE 1977. CLEMENTS, IN TURN, EXPRESSED REGRET THAT FONMIN SAW SITUATION IN THIS LIGHT, WITH WHICH HE COULD NOT AGREE, AND REVIEWED REGIONAL SITUATION AS VIEWED BY USG, STRESSING POTENTIAL INSTABILITY AND VOLATILITY IN PERSIAN GULF REGION FOR NEXT THREE YEARS AS SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN MOVE AHEAD TO CREATE VIABLE DEFENSE FORCES FOR REGIONAL SECURITY PURPOSES.

4. CLEMENTS STRESSED HIS SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT AT GOB ATTITUDE, WHICH

HE SAID SURPRISED HIM. FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED BY REITERATING GOB VIEW THAT "BURDEN" OF MIDEASTFOR MUST BE SHARED REGIONALLY. HE STATED THAT BAHRAIN HAD SOUNDED OUT REGIONAL NEIGHBORS OVER PAST THREE YEARS BUT THAT NONE WAS PREPARED TO PUBLICLY SUPPORT MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. HE COMPLAINED THAT PRIVATELY THEY TELL THE BAHRAINIS THAT MIDEASTFOR'S CONTINUED TENURE IS ACCEPTABLE, AND EVEN DESIRABLE IN SOME CASES, BUT DECLINE TO DO SO PUBLICLY. BAHRAIN FEELS THE "LONELY BURDEN" OF HOSTING A GREAT POWER BASE IS TOO GREAT FOR IT IN THE ABSENCE OF OPEN REGIONAL SUPPORT. CLEMENTS POINTED OUT THE CONSTRAINTS ON SAUDI ARABIA IN VIEW OF ITS WIDER ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND STABILITY. CONFIDENTIAL

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IT COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED PUBLICLY WITH MIDEASTFOR BECAUSE OF THIS BROADER ROLE WHICH THE USG UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED. EACH COUNTRY, HE POINTED OUT, MUST CARRY A DIFFERENT BURDEN. FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED GOB VIEW THAT "BURDEN" MUST BE SHARED REGIONALLY. WHEN CLEMENTS AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT GOB DECISION FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT IT WAS AN UNHAPPY DECISION FOR THE GOB, MADE OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A "NEW ARRANGEMENT" WHICH WOULD HAVE

THE EFFECT OF RELIEVING BAHRAIN OF SOME OF ITS BURDEN. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR SUCH NEW ARRANGEMENT BUT HAD NOT FOUND ANYTHING ACCEPTABLE. THE AMIR BROKE INTO THE CONVERSATION AT THIS POINT TO ASK HOW MANY YEARS EXTENSION THE USG WANTED. CLEMENTS REPLIED THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR A THREE YEAR EXTENSION TO BRIDGE THE TIME UNTIL LOCAL FORCES (I.E., SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN) COULD TAKE OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR REGIONAL STABILITY. AMIR STATED THAT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS COULD BE HELD WITH THE NEWLY-ARRIVED AMBASSADOR--TO WHICH BOTH CLEMENTS AND AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT TIME IS SHORT SINCE MIDEASTFOR MUST BEGIN TO REDUCE ITS PRESENCE VERY SOON. ADMIRAL CROWE SAID THAT JANUARY 1977 WAS THE DATE FOR THE INITIATION OF MIDEASTFOR STAFF AND LOGISTICS REDUCTIONS. CLEMENTS NOTED THAT IF MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE WAS NOT SEEN BY THE GOB AS BEING IN ITS INTEREST, THEN IT WOULD GO. "WE ONLY STAY WHERE WE ARE WANTED."

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